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Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Operational activities for development: operational activities for development of the United Nations system; South-South cooperation for development

Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Letter dated 30 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the annual ministerial meeting of the least developed countries, held in New York on 24 September 2016 (see annex).

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I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 (a), 23 (a), 24 (a) and (b) and 25, as contained in document A/71/100.

(*Signed*) Masud Bin **Momen**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh
of the United Nations
Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau
of the Least Developed Countries

Annex to the letter dated 30 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries

New York, 24 September 2016

We, the Ministers and heads of delegation of the least developed countries, having met in New York on 24 September 2016 to provide strategic guidance for the full, effective and timely implementation of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly calls upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/15 of 26 July 2016 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Welcoming with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[1] and the flagship report of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, entitled *State of the Least Developed Countries 2016*,[2]

Welcoming also the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, as well as its annex I (Comprehensive refugee response framework) and annex II (Towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration), adopted at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held in New York on 19 September 2016,[3]

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[1] A/71/66-E/2016/11.

[2] Available from http://unohrlls.org/custom-content/uploads/2016/08/State-of-LDCs2016.pdf.

[3] General Assembly resolution 71/1.

Noting the first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016,

Looking forward to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,

Adopt the following declaration:

1. We reiterate our firm commitment to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into our national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders;

2. We recognize that many of the least developed countries continue to face multiple structural challenges and constraints, including narrow production and export bases, stagnant trade and investment flows, diminishing productivity growth, weak land and natural resource governance, and widespread poverty, hunger and malnutrition. These long-standing challenges are compounded by new and emerging challenges, such as climate change, increased incidences of natural disasters and public health emergencies, conflicts, declining commodity prices and rising capital outflows. Without a structural transformation that tackles institutional and capacity constraints, the least developed countries will remain vulnerable to various economic, social and environmental shocks;

3. We reaffirm that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. In this regard, we further recognize that the least developed countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and those experiencing political instability, or unable to deliver basic State services, have specific structural challenges and require context-specific approaches, including targeted national policies and international support measures to address these challenges and to provide support for peacebuilding, State-building activities and sustainable development; and we note the principles set out in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States by the Group of Seven Plus, countries that are, or have been, affected by conflict;

4. We recognize that the least developed countries represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare, prosperity and food and energy security. Therefore, a successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of the least developed countries will contribute to the causes of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all. Further strengthening our collective actions towards enabling the young populations and women of the least developed countries to fully and effectively participate in economic, social and political life will more effectively contribute to equitable and inclusive development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice;

5. We also recognize that, while the least developed countries have made significant efforts towards achieving the objectives, goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action, a lot still remains to be done by ourselves. The principle of country ownership and leadership remains crucial in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development, and we recommit to take the lead in formulating, implementing, following up and reviewing our own coherent economic and

development policies, strategies and plans. We call upon the international community to fulfil its commitment to give special attention to the least developed countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

6. We welcome early efforts in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels, building on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to complete their unfinished business. We are encouraged by these efforts, including by several least developed countries, and in this first year of its implementation, look forward to further progress in, inter alia, revitalizing and enhancing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development in least developed countries, aligning existing policies with the new global plan of action, increasing policy and system-wide coherence and integration for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, addressing existing and emerging challenges, enhancing national capacities for evidence-based and data-driven decision-making and favouring participatory, cooperative and enabling environments at all levels. We take note with appreciation of the Secretary-General's first annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals;[4]

7. We call upon the international community, including the United Nations system, to realize its commitment to the full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to provide support for its mainstreaming into the national development policies and programmes of the least developed countries. We also call upon it to realize its commitments to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, in a spirit of global solidarity, focused in particular on the eradication of poverty, the promotion of inclusive growth and the implementation of social protection systems, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable;

8. We underline the fact that in order to achieve the universal Sustainable Development Goals, systemic issues also need to be better addressed, as highlighted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.[5] We call upon development partners to enhance the coherence of development policies with other areas, especially trade and finance, including international tax cooperation and the fight against capital flight in least developed countries;

9. We welcome the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030[6] underscore the fact that the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, deserve special attention and reflect the concerns and aspirations of the least developed countries, recall the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underline the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the

[4] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.I.10).

[5] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

[6] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex.

Istanbul Programme of Action at the national and subnational levels, and encourage coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

10. We also welcome the successful convening of the first high-level political forum after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, and commend the countries that presented voluntary national reviews to highlight the early steps taken to implement the 2030 Agenda at the 2016 high-level political forum;

11. We call upon the international community to ensure full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in particular those parts that relate to least developed countries. We note the launch of the Global Infrastructure Forum on 16 April 2016 during the 2016 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, the first meeting of the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, held from 18 to 20 April 2016, and the initial meeting of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, held on 6 and 7 June 2016. We call for a timely agreement on the modalities of future financing for development forums;

12. We recognize with deep concern that the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change owing to their location, low income, low institutional capacity and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture. We are deeply worried that increases in global temperature, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other climate change impacts are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal least developed countries;

13. We stress that reducing vulnerability to climate change is a global challenge faced by all, in particular those living in poverty. We recognize the synergies of the Paris Agreement on climate change with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We welcome the Paris Agreement, under which all parties will take urgent action to address climate change, and in that regard look forward to its prompt ratification, acceptance, approval or accession and its early entry into force and implementation. In this regard, we note the special event convened by the Secretary-General in New York on 21 September 2016 to deposit the instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Paris Agreement by parties to the Agreement. We also look forward to the mobilization of adequate resources to provide assistance for its implementation. We call for specific support measures for those countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in particular least developed countries;[7]

14. We call for effective delivery on climate change commitments and access by the least developed countries to all relevant climate change-related funds, as applicable;

15. We call upon the development partners to operationalize fully and in a timely manner the Green Climate Fund, with the goals of mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020, promoting and facilitating clean development mechanism projects in the least developed countries and addressing the needs of people displaced as a result of extreme weather events. We stress that the allocation of adaptation and

[7] As provided for in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

mitigation funds should be additional to official development assistance commitments and should be fair, equitable and proportionate to the impact of climate change;

16. We welcome the decision of the Board of the Green Climate Fund to aim for a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation over time on a grant equivalent basis and to aim for a floor of 50 per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries;

17. We recognize the importance of building productive capacity as a critical enabler for the development and graduation of the least developed countries, and call upon those countries and their development partners to ensure that enhanced focus is placed on policies and means to address productive capacity-building and employment creation. We also recognize that private capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, play a complementary and catalytic role in building and strengthening productive capacity in the least developed countries. We will strive to continue to strengthen the underlying investment climate, and call upon development partners to continue to provide enhanced financial and technical support to those countries to develop productive capacities, including for enhancing the management capacity of the least developed countries. We note that international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank provide capacity development to the least developed countries through the provision of direct technical assistance and training for country authorities, and we invite them to further strengthen such support, responding to the demands and needs of those countries, within the framework of existing commitments, in accordance with their national development policies and strategies;

18. We emphasize that the development of physical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and that significant amounts of investment and technology are essential, including through public-private partnerships, innovative financing, regional integration and appropriate institutions and regulation, to bridge the existing savings-investment gap in the least developed countries. In this regard, we will strengthen the underlying investment climate, with enhanced support provided by the development partners and international financial institutions, including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as in procurement practices and policies. We call upon the development partners to provide enhanced financial and technical support to the least developed countries for their infrastructure development and management. We look forward to the establishment and effective functioning of a new multi-stakeholder forum to bridge the infrastructure gap, which should give special priority to the needs and challenges of the least developed countries;

19. We recognize that agriculture, food and nutritional security and rural development are vitally important for the least developed countries. Agriculture plays a crucial role both in promoting food security and as the major economic activity for much of the population, with direct linkages to the eradication of poverty and hunger, rural development and gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as exports, commodity and production diversification and agroprocessing capacity. We therefore underline the need for adequate investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, research and

agricultural extension services in the least developed countries. We recognize that commodity diversification and value addition as well as the effective participation of the least developed countries in regional and global value chains by upgrading and increasing the domestic value added and technology content of their products are vitally important so that they can gain the maximum benefit from their agricultural products;

20. We reiterate that official development assistance continues to be the largest and a critical source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries and that it provides a buffer to weather the impacts of the unstable and volatile global economic environment. We welcome the decision by the European Union, which reaffirms its collective commitment to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of the official development assistance/gross national income within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and undertakes to meet collectively the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries in the short term and to reach 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda.[8] We also welcome the provisions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that encourage official development assistance providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries, and express encouragement to those providers that are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to least developed countries. These are some qualitative and quantitative changes in the decades-long target on official development assistance for the least developed countries. We call upon all development partners to fulfil these targets;

21. We reiterate our call upon the donor countries to provide 0.20 per cent of their gross national income to the least developed countries by 2020 and 0.25 per cent of their gross national income by 2030 or at least 50 per cent of net official development assistance to the least developed countries;

22. We underline the fact that the allocation of global official development assistance resources should take into account the structural handicaps and constraints which are unique to the least developed countries. We call upon development partners to ensure the right balance in the allocation of official development assistance among various sectors, with particular focus on productive sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture and information and communications technology;

23. We welcome the targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to migration and remittances, and strongly urge partner countries to start taking action, specifically with respect to reducing to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances by 2030 and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent, and to facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies;

24. We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a

[8] See General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. We underline the urgent need to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of migration status, refugees and displaced persons at their countries of origin, transit and destination. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries. We also underline the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received;

25. We express our commitment to improve cooperation on sustainable return and reintegration strategies, including by providing support for source countries' initiatives to enhance their absorption capacity, particularly through community-based investments in return areas, and by sharing information and good practices;

26. We look forward to the launch this year of a process of intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018 at an intergovernmental conference. We call for open, transparent and inclusive consultations in which least developed countries will actively participate in order to reflect their special concerns and priorities related to migration, labour mobility and remittances;

27. We recognize that while official development assistance must remain central and play a catalytic role, there is a need to tap additional resources, including through innovative financing mechanisms which can provide more stable and predictable resources for development and are based on new partnerships between countries at different levels of development and public and private actors. Specific mechanisms for innovative financing should be operationalized to mobilize additional resources for financing sustainable development. We stress that the innovative sources of financing should be additional, substantial and predictable and disbursed in a manner that respects the priorities and special needs of the least developed countries and does not unduly burden them;

28. We welcome the work of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, including its subcommittees. We call for the realization of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda agreement that all companies, including multinationals, pay taxes to the Governments of countries where economic activity occurs and value is created, in accordance with national and international laws and policies;

29. We recognize that international trade is an important determinant of global growth and development and that there remains considerable untapped potential in least developed countries to exploit the benefits of international trade. There has been an increasing prevalence of new-generation regional trade agreements, which can diminish incentives for universal negotiations and may have adverse effects on countries not included in the regional trade agreements, especially least developed countries. We also express our concern that the continuous lack of progress on most of the issues of the Doha Development Agenda undermines the aspiration of least developed countries to gain the development benefits of a fair and equitable trading system;

30. We express our deep concern that in 2015, merchandise exports of the least developed countries contracted by 25 per cent, a significantly bigger drop than in 2014. As a result, the share of least developed countries in world merchandise exports decreased to 0.97 per cent. We therefore call upon the members of the World Trade Organization to strongly commit to addressing the marginalization of least developed countries in international trade and to improve their effective participation in the multilateral trading system. We also call upon the members to fully and faithfully implement all the least developed country-specific provisions contained in the existing World Trade Organization agreements, ministerial decisions and declarations;

31. We call upon developed country members and developing country members of the World Trade Organization declaring themselves in a position to do so to realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all products originating from all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, with a view to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals target of doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020. We also call upon them to take steps to facilitate market access for least developed countries' products, including by developing simple and transparent rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by members of the World Trade Organization at the Tenth Ministerial Conference, held in Nairobi. We also welcome the ministerial decision of the World Trade Organization on the implementation of preferential treatment in favour of services and service suppliers of least developed countries and increasing least developed countries' participation in services trade,[9] and underline the need for its full implementation;

32. We call for the lifting of and total elimination of unilateral economic measures imposed on developing countries, including on the least developed countries, which have negative impacts on the development and prosperity of these countries and adversely impact the efforts towards their graduation;

33. We take note of the submission by the group of least developed countries of the World Trade Organization to receive special priority and preference in services sectors and modes of supply of export interest to the least developed countries.[10] We also take note of the notifications made by some members of the World Trade Organization to the Council for Trade in Services of preferential measures to enhance least developed countries' participation in world services trade.[11] In this regard, we urge all other members of the World Trade Organization to do so and to take measures to extend specific preferences to the services and service suppliers of least developed countries so that they can enhance their participation in services trade;

34. We underline the importance of aid for trade initiatives in trade-related capacity-building; overcoming supply-side constraints; infrastructure development; and facilitating the integration of least developed countries' economies in regional and global trade. To this end, we call upon members to accord priority to the least developed countries' projects and ensure that at least 50 per cent of the aid for trade

[9] WT/MIN(15)/48-WT/L/982, 15 December 2015.

[10] World Trade Organization, document S/C/W/356.

[11] Available from www.wto.org/english/news_e/news15_e/serv_03aug15_e.htm.

is allocated to least developed countries. We welcome the extension of the Enhanced Integrated Framework into phase two, and urge members to further intensify their efforts to secure the necessary level of contributions for the timely replenishment for effective implementation without any disruption of the Framework from 2016 to 2022;

35. We welcome the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries and the offer to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees, such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency;

36. We reaffirm our invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to include the issue of investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries in the agenda of the Board, with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of United Nations system support that can contribute to enhancing the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries and the ability of those countries to attract such investment. We request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the progress made in this regard;

37. We welcome the decision of the Economic and Social Council to discuss, at its next annual forum on financing for development follow-up, adopting and implementing investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries, pursuant to the relevant resolutions on the matter, including General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the mandate of the annual forum on financing for development follow-up set out therein, and recall that the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the forum will be fed into the overall follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

38. In this regard, we call upon Member States to take a decision at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly to establish an international investment support centre for the least developed countries under the auspices of the United Nations to provide a one-stop arrangement to help stimulate foreign direct investment in the least developed countries, which can make available the following interrelated and mutually reinforcing services, as already agreed upon in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda: (a) an information depository for investment facilities in the least developed countries; (b) provision of technical support to assist the least developed countries in preparing project documents and negotiating complex large-scale contracts; (c) provision of advisory support in dispute resolution; and (d) risk insurance and guarantees in close collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;

39. We emphasize that in order for the least developed countries to become globally competitive in the evolving knowledge economy it is necessary to address their science, technology and innovation challenges. We expect the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries to play a pivotal role in this respect. In this regard, we welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of the Governing

Council of the Technology Bank, and call upon States Members of the United Nations to establish the Bank in 2016 so that it can start operating as early as possible in 2017. We welcome the draft charter of the Bank prepared by the Governing Council of the Bank, contained in a note by the Secretary-General,[12] and look forward to the adoption of the charter by the General Assembly at the earliest possible time. We appreciate the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for its support provided in the operationalization of the Bank. We commend the Government of Turkey for its generous offer to host the Bank, and we call upon the Government of Turkey to make a strong resource contribution to the Bank to ensure its viability and effectiveness. We also call upon other donor countries and development partners to make strong contributions to the Bank for its effective functioning and to increase their assistance dedicated to addressing the science, technology and innovation challenges of the least developed countries. We request the Secretary-General to take all measures necessary to fully operationalize the Technology Bank during 2017 so as to fulfil target 17.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

40. We underline the fact that the long-term framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should not only ensure that the goals and targets are achieved, but also secure the sustainability of the achievements. We are concerned that the biggest part of the risks and uncertainties that could derail global human progress over the next decades relates to climate change and other severe shocks and crises. We note with concern that the spread of the Ebola virus disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, a devastating earthquake in Nepal and widespread floods in Myanmar have wreaked havoc in the lives and livelihoods of these countries. We therefore call for the timely establishment and operationalization of a crisis mitigation and resilience-building mechanism for the least developed countries, as proposed in the 2030 Agenda and the outcome document of the International Conference on Financing for Development;

41. In this regard, we recall the decision contained in the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, to undertake an in-depth analysis on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries, at the national and international levels, with a view to building and further strengthening crisis mitigation and resilience in the least developed countries, and the request that the General Assembly determine the parameters of this analysis at its seventy-first session. The analysis should focus, inter alia, on the following issues:

- Taking stock of various shocks, including natural disasters, economic crises and health epidemics, and their disproportionate impacts on the sustainable development of least developed countries
- Considering the current national, regional and international landscape to better equip least developed countries against shocks, and its effectiveness

[12] A/71/363.

- Making recommendations on the possible risk-management framework at the subnational, national, regional and global levels to combine ex ante preparations for risk with the ex post ability to cope with it
- Examining and outlining potential functions, activities, working methods, governance mechanisms, staffing arrangements and costs for a crisis mitigation and resilience-building mechanism for least developed countries
- Elaborating on how the international community, including donor countries, countries of the South, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations can support the resilience-building mechanism for least developed countries
- Examining how the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders, as well as local knowledge and community involvement, can contribute to resilience-building of least developed countries through the provision of insurance, the creation of employment, awareness-raising and other measures.

42. We underline the fact that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative have created additional fiscal space in many least developed countries. However, we are concerned that there are risks of re-indebtedness because of the huge development needs in the least developed countries and it is a matter of deep concern that in spite of the Initiatives, many least developed countries still struggle with a high debt burden. We call upon development partners to take effective measures to cancel all multilateral and bilateral debts owed by all least developed countries to creditors, both public and private, and to arrange debt standstill and debt swaps until the debt cancellation is fully realized. We also call upon creditors, both public and private, for additional effective measures to facilitate financing of our economic development, including access to both concessional and non-concessional resources for investment in critically needed infrastructure and development projects. We also underline the need for multilateral frameworks for sovereign debt restructuring and welcome the adoption by the General Assembly on 10 September 2015 of its resolution 69/319 on Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes;

43. We recall the goal in the Istanbul Programme of Action to increase total primary energy supply per capita in the least developed countries to the same level as in other developing countries. To achieve this goal, the least developed countries should be at the centre of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7. We also underline the fact that further efforts should be made to ensure that least developed countries receive special focus throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024);

44. We call upon the development partners to strengthen their support provided to least developed countries to develop and further strengthen the energy sector in generation, distribution and energy efficiency, including in renewable energy, other clean energy sources and natural gas, inter alia, by providing enhanced financial and technical assistance and by facilitating private sector investment, in accordance with national priorities and needs. We invite the development partners and the development finance institutions to play a larger and more coordinated role

in investing in infrastructure projects in the least developed countries, mitigating and sharing risks and ensuring guarantees;

45. We reaffirm that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, and the full realization of the human rights of all people are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. We reiterate the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies;

46. We underline that North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation is vital to the least developed countries, particularly in regard to technical assistance, sharing of best practices in terms of their development, especially in areas of productive capacity-building, infrastructure, energy, science and technology, trade, investment and transit transport cooperation, and we call upon the countries of the South to further strengthen their support provided to the least developed countries in all of these areas in a predictable manner;

47. We reiterate our call to the international community, especially the United Nations system, to extend necessary support to the least developed countries in strengthening their national statistical capacities to develop their national databases that contain national and international data on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with related metadata that are available to all interested users. We request the Secretary-General to mobilize adequate resources for the least developed countries to enable them to actively participate in all review and follow-up activities at the national, regional and global levels;

48. We recall the ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to enable half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020 and commit to take the steps necessary to complete the graduation process. We underline the fact that each instance of successful graduation will constitute an extraordinary success not only for the countries themselves, but also for the United Nations and for development cooperation by the international community. We are encouraged that notwithstanding persisting challenges and constraints, several least developed countries have announced their intention to reach the status of graduation by or around 2020. Countries such as Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal and Rwanda, among others, have set graduation as a goal in their national development strategies;

49. We recall paragraph 26 of General Assembly resolution 68/224, in which the Assembly requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to extend necessary support in a coordinated manner to the countries that have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020 in preparing their graduation and transition strategy, and we invite the organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend the necessary technical support to the countries aspiring to graduation in developing their graduation and smooth transition strategies. We call upon the development partners to provide support for the implementation of the graduation strategy with a view to enabling those countries to graduate from least developed country status. Likewise, we call for

providing support for the implementation of the smooth transition strategy after graduation, taking into account each country's development situation, in order to ensure its sustainable development without any disruption;

50. We emphasize that graduation should not be seen as an end goal, but should rather be regarded as a means to achieve structural change, poverty eradication and economic diversification in the country and thereby contribute to the sustainable development goals in an accelerated and effective manner. We recognize the urgent need to undertake a comprehensive review of the graduation criteria for least developed countries, taking into account the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. In this regard, we recall the recommendations made in the Midterm Review that the review of the graduation criteria by the Committee for Development Policy should be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects of the evolving international development context, including relevant agendas;

51. We recognize that the United Nations development system is challenged to meet the growing demands for more varied assistance by doing more, quicker and better. We invite all organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank Group and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by implementing scaled-up programmes of financial and technical cooperation, to integrate it into their programmes of work, to participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels, and to include in their annual reports to the Executive Boards and to the Economic and Social Council the progress made in this regard, as mandated by the Council in paragraph 9 of its resolution 2013/46;

52. We are concerned that the share of expenditure for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining, and invite the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations development system and other multilateral organizations to prioritize allocations to least developed countries, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates, including by allocating at least 75 per cent of their programme resources in least developed countries;[13]

53. We emphasize that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review must provide the strategic direction of operational activities for development in the very first years of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and lay the foundations for the United Nations development system to rise to the challenges of the new development agenda, at both the entity and system-wide levels. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review must address the functions of the United Nations development system, aligning it with the 2030 Agenda. The functions of the United Nations development system must be supported by appropriate funding flows and mechanisms, as well as governance structures;

54. We underline the fact that the General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should reflect the key priorities of least developed countries contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Political

[13] Currently 74 per cent of core programme resources of the United Nations Development Programme is allocated for work in least developed countries.

Declaration of the Midterm Review and ensure synergy and coherence in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Programme of Action at the subnational, national, regional and global levels, and encourage coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

55. We underscore the fact that the recently adopted agendas accorded special attention to the least developed countries and reflected their concerns and aspirations. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review must translate this attention into dedicated support provided to least developed countries by the United Nations development system in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call upon the development partners to enhance resources, especially core resources, to the United Nations development system with a view to enhancing its support, in particular direct support and service delivery provided to least developed countries;

56. We recognize that the income-based classifications of countries are becoming less and less relevant and unable to take into account fragility and other structural constraints, while least developed countries represent the most homogenous group of countries with very low variations. We therefore stress that the least developed country category should be universally recognized to facilitate the coordinated and coherent follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of progress made in these countries. We invite the General Assembly to take necessary measures in this regard during its seventy-first session, in particular through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

57. In this regard, we recall the invitation to the Committee for Development Policy to look into the reasons for and consequences of the non-application of the least developed country category by some organizations of the United Nations development system and to include its findings on this matter in its annual report to the Economic and Social Council;

58. We request the Office of the High Representative to extend necessary support to the least developed countries in the implementation and monitoring of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through coordination with various United Nations entities, raising global awareness, mobilizing international support and resources in favour of the least developed countries, building multistakeholder partnerships and reaching out to all stakeholders, including by establishing partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to enhance support for the three groups of countries;

59. We recall paragraph 26 of General Assembly resolution 67/220, in which the Assembly invites the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to include implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action as a standing item on the agenda of the Board, and we call upon the Board to continue to follow up on the implementation of the Programme of Action and to keep the Assembly informed on a regular basis;

60. We express our deep concern that least developed countries are hugely underrepresented in the decision-making processes of the global financial architecture. Forty-eight least developed countries, with 12 per cent of the global population, collectively enjoy only 3.33 per cent of the voting power of the

International Monetary Fund and 3.84 per cent of the voting power of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This needs to be addressed for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the global financial system. We recommit to broadening and strengthening the voice and participation of least developed countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting and global economic governance. We invite the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and other main international regulatory standard-setting bodies to continue efforts to increase the voice of least developed countries in norm-setting processes to ensure that their concerns are taken into consideration;

61. We most sincerely acknowledge the supportive role being played by the Group of Friends of Least Developed Countries, and invite the Group to further strengthen its support for the effective realization of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the outcome of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of all other international and regional conferences and processes as they relate to the least developed countries.